

Aspin, Les

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Aspin Says U2 in Turkey Not Essential to Verify

SALT

The United States is developing at least five alternatives to U2 flights over Turkey as a means of monitoring Soviet compliance with the strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT II), according to Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis.).

Aspin, who is chairman of the House Intelligence oversight subcommittee and who recently has held a series of closed hearings on treaty verification, made the disclosure in a statement released yesterday.

He urged House conferees to reject a \$50 million military grant to Turkey, funds that the Carter administration maintains will have an important bearing on U. S. ability to monitor SALT II.

The Senate has voted to approve the military grant program. Last week, however, the House disapproved the grant and converted it into a \$50 million loan.

Turkish officials reacted angrily to the House action, declaring they would ban proposed American U2 flights over Turkish soil to monitor Soviet missile tests.

In his statement yesterday, Aspin said that "...if we don't get U2 rights from Turkey, the loss will be a pinprick and not a body blow to our ability to verify SALT."

He said that evidence presented at his recent hearings suggests "the U2 spy plane flights out of Turkey would be nice to have—and I hope the Turks will change their mind." But he added that "there are a multiplicity of other intelligence methods for collecting this same information and the U2 is by no means the best."

A specialist on military policy matters, Aspin noted that the U2 would provide intelligence only on Soviet compliance with SALT II provisions restricting development of new types of liquid-fueled intercontinental ballistic missiles, which are tested in the vicinity of the Black Sea, which borders Turkey and the Soviet Union.

"It wouldn't have anything to do with solid-fueled missiles, which are tested in the northern U.S.S.R., far from Turkey—or with other parts of the agreement," he said.

The administration has cited the loss of U. S. intelligence monitoring bases in Iran as an urgent reason to approve the \$50 million Turkish military grant.

Aspin said the U2 never has been tested in an electronic intelligence gathering mission around the Black Sea because the Turkish government has not permitted any testing. At his hearings, Aspin added, there were strong suggestions that "unique problems in the area may make reception aboard the U2 poor indeed."

Aspin declined to discuss the alternative monitoring systems on grounds that they are classified. He did say, however, that the U2 is "the least sensitive of all the alternatives and the flights would have been obvious to the Soviets anyhow."

Aspin's statement was welcome news to a coalition of members of Congress who have been strongly sympathetic with Greece in its differences with Turkey on the Cyprus question. It was yet another example in which U.S. national security interests have

been mingled with the Cyprus muddle during the five years of Turkey's military occupation of part of the east Mediterranean island. The United States has been flying U2 missions from a British sovereign base in Cyprus for more than a decade.